



**S E A C**  
**Special Education Advisory Council**  
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**Special Education  
Advisory Council**

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Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair  
Committee on Education  
Hawaii State Capitol  
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: S.B. 2922 - PROPOSING AMENDMENTS TO ARTICLES  
VIII AND X OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF  
HAWAII TO AUTHORIZE THE LEGISLATURE TO ESTABLISH  
A SURCHARGE TO INCREASE FUNDING FOR PUBLIC  
EDUCATION.

Dear Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee,

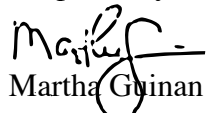
The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC), Hawaii's State Advisory Panel under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), **strongly supports the intent** of S.B. 2922 to increase funding for public education in Hawaii.

Hawaii serves a smaller percentage of students with disabilities compared to the entire student population than the national average--10.6% compared to 13.0% for most states--which may indicate that we are not identifying and serving all students who are eligible for special education services. Those who are served have experienced lackluster progress and a growing achievement gap with their non-disabled peers. Hawaii also serves significantly fewer children in the general education classroom contrary to IDEA mandates for placement in the least restrictive environment.

To address these inequities will take additional resources, including higher teacher pay to attract more qualified teachers to the field, smaller class sizes to encourage greater inclusion and specialized services and supports to meet the unique learning needs of these students. An enhanced funding stream for public education would benefit ALL children in Hawaii, including those who are most vulnerable to academic failure.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important legislation. If you have questions or concerns, please contact me.

Respectfully,

  
Martha Guinan  
Chair

  
Ivalee Sinclair  
Legislative Committee Chair